

We ate breakfast long before daylight and were well on our way at sunrise. I rode "Selius", a horse of Mr. Armer's. Melinda rode "Brownie", the one I got from Hook as he is not quite as gentle as Selius. Melinda is a first class rider while I am not of late years. We went 5 ½ miles or so to the foot of the mountain in which the caves are located, fastened our horses to brush, and climbed the mountain which was by no means an easy task, as it is covered with debris from the ruined walls and one slides back a good deal like the "frog in the well" who jumped two feet forward and the fell back three. But we finally reached the dwellings; it was far superior to what I had anticipated and worth the trouble. The dwelling is built of small rocks laid up in cement and is cemented inside and out and sets well back beneath an overhanging rock. This rock is, I should think, about 200 ft. high and curves over. We found traces of 33 rooms and some 18 of them are in fair preservation. It is seven or eight stories high or perhaps more, I should think, judging from the poles and still clinging high up to the rock. There was originally no opening in the outer wall but the dwellers in the house climbed up a ladder of some sort and went in at the second story as the Zuni and kindred tribes do yet! One can enter it now from above for the ceiling is partly fallen in. Another had had a door originally but for some reason the people living there decided to close that room also, and so smoothly and well was the work done, that not a trace of any doorway having ever been there can be seen from outside the room. But inside of it one can easily see the rocks filling in the doorway laid up in cement, but not cemented over this side. When the ceiling of this room was intact after the door was walled up, it must have been nearly air tight and one wonders why it was done. It is located in a rather central situation in the second story. A Mr. Danforth two years ago this winter found the skeleton of an infant in the wall about 4 ft. from the floor, or possibly a little less. I saw the place today... The place in which they lay was hollowed out of the wall and cemented over. A few flat rocks laid up in cement hid it forever from its parents. The outside was smoothly cemented till it could not be distinguished from the rest of the wall. Another room had on its eastern wall a hieroglyphic representing probably the sun and some other lines that might be anything. In several places are parts of fingers or of the hand, complete and perfect as the day, ages ago, when the hands were pressed into the plastic clay.

There is much to be seen in the building that I've not time to speak of. One ought to stay a week to explore it if they hope to satisfy their curiosity. Across a gulch to the right of nol is a second smaller but deeply interesting and the most perfect I've ever seen. It has traces of 22 rooms and 16 are in fair order. 2 rooms and a hall are as perfect as the day they were finished. The hall is a narrow space between two rooms and has a short flight of steps leading to a tint landing on the upper floor, and the stairs are quite wide, but very low, not more than 3 ½ to 4 ½ inches, I should think, in height from one step to the next, and so worn by the myriad feet that ascended and descended there as to be hollow troughs in the center. We were rambling around one of the upper story rooms exclaiming on the extremely fine state of preservation it was in when Clara saw something in a dark corner she wanted to look at started towards it. The floor was covered with various sorts of trash several inches deep and she waded toward the corner. Suddenly there was a scream and the place where Clara had stood was vacant but certainly not silent for heartrending cries came from below. For a minute we stood nearly petrified with fright then I flew out of the room and down the stairs to a room opening from the landing on the east side and, poking my candle in, beheld Clara, hysterical from her scare, sitting in an immense heap of cholla that filled the room half way to the ceiling, and were evidently stored there by rats tho' for what purpose I'm sure I can't guess. Truly these were appalling. But when Clara saw that she could reach the door by crawling thru that agonizing pile of thorns she bravely stopped crying and started. The only aid one could give her was to hold the candle so she could see and that I did. If we had had a rope we might have lowered it down the aperture she fell thru and pulled her up and it would have been less painful, but there was no rope. So she crawled out, and if we had not been frightened at the consequences of so many cholla thorns in the poor child's tender flesh, we would certainly have laughed, for a more ridiculous object was never seen. The chollas were all over her clothes, her limbs, and her hair and piled up 8 and 10 deep till she was a walking stack of them. Well we took her and pulled off all the big ones till we reached the inner layer which was attached principally to her skin. And there trouble for us and agony for her began in earnest. Of course the cruel hooked barbs broke from the cholla rather than let go the flesh and after we finally got the last whole cholla off she still had scores of these thorns all over her

excepting her face. Then we girls half led, half carried, her to an empty room, one where there was not much debris, tho' dust of course, spread my big waterproof down on the floor, stripped her, and two of us (Alice and I) picked and cut and pulled out all the chollas we could while Melinda got all the thorns possible out of her clothes. Then we had part of a bottle of milk left from lunch and we got it and rubbed her with that and it eased the pain a little. She dressed and we took her to a cozy corner outside under some mesquite, rolled her up snugly in our cloaks, and she sobbed herself to sleep. Melinda had made several trips to the cave and so to whom it was an old story, offered to stay with her while Alice and I continued exploring. So we returned to the ruins and after spending another half hour getting the chollas out of our hands which we had got in pulling them at first off Clara, we began where we left off. Tom and Frank and Bud had examined the upper room and the place Clara fell through was an opening for a trap door and probably a ladder extending to the lower floor. Our cholla incident had taken a long two hours. So we hurried up our inspection. We found many fingerprints here too and a room that evidently had been a kitchen. The floor is formed partly by a rock (which also forms part of the side) and in this rock were ½ a dozen metates hollowed out of and varying in size, depth, and shape. This rock wall and the ceiling above were black with smoke and there was a quantity of ashes around. At sunset we went to the first ruin and while Tom went down the mountain to a little spring for water, we built a fire. On his return we made coffee and fried bacon, and soon had supper ready. Clara was suffering a good deal but she bore it bravely. We enjoyed our supper greatly, for hunger was an excellent sauce, and Mrs. Armer's bread and butter, pie and cookies, pickles and can of preserve melted away as if by magic before 7 hungry people. It seemed strange to be chatting and laughing so gaily in a house built unknown centuries ago by people unlike us in appearance, but who had known joy and grief, pleasure and pain, same as our race of today knows these, and who had laughed, cried, sung, danced, married and died, mourned or rejoiced their lives away in this once populous town or castle, or whatever one would call it! It made an uncanny feeling come over us as we rested till moonrise and talked of this long dead people and told the stories we knew concerning them. But my children are a courageous crowd and tho' they ranged in age from 6 to 14 (Alice 14, Melinda 13, Clara 12, Tom 10, Frank 7, Bud 6) they never dreamed of being afraid. By and by the moon rose and softened the marks of time on the scarred, weather stained cliff dwelling, till it was beautiful. Then presently we descended the mountain and getting into our saddles started home to Armer's, reaching there about 9 ½ tired but happy. Clara, sore as she was, declaring she was glad that she went. Mrs. Armer had supper waiting and we did justice to our second one, after our ride half an hour later. Melinda will stay at the Armers for a while. Alice, Clara, and I started home. We got there about 12 ½ and found everyone in bed. Mrs. H got up and rubbed Clara thoroughly with some kind of home made salve and we were soon all asleep. Armer fairly made me promise to teach the spring term. I'm glad he is suited.